

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

The Monthly Publication of
PSARA EDUCATION FUND
“Uniting Generations for a Secure Future”

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April 2017

Theft of 2020
Election Underway

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Executive Board Challenge to Members

On May 10, the Seattle Foundation will again sponsor Give Big Day. The Foundation is strongly encouraging participating organizations to issue challenge pledges for Give Big Day, and that is what the PSARA Executive Board is doing! The Board is challenging the broader PSARA membership to meet or exceed the dollars they are donating.

The 32 members of the Board have pledged the sum of \$7,700 as a challenge to you. Our Board is not composed of big donors. It is composed of committed progressive political activists with differing financial capabilities who are making a financial sacrifice to further the educational work of the PSARA Education Fund.

This year, Give Big Day will be different in several important ways. Online donations are not limited to just one day. Donors can start donating through the Seattle Foundation website beginning on April 27. End of the day on May 10, the officially designated Give Big Day, is the last date to donate.

Also this year there is no stretch fund from the Seattle Foundation. So many organizations are participating that the stretch fund match has become too small. Instead, the Foundation will be sponsoring a drawing with 250 organizations receiving \$1,000 each.

For those members who may not know, the PSARA Education Fund, a tax deductible non-profit, covers all the costs associated with *The Retiree Advocate*, which is over \$1,500 per month. The Education Fund also covers the cost of all the additional educational materials and education work PSARA does.

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May Day

By Mike Warren

May Day, 2017, the original Labor Day, will be commemorated in the Seattle area with a march and rally. On May 1, activities begin with a rally at 11 a.m. at Judkins Park, 2150 S. Norman St., Seattle. The march will begin at 1 p.m. PSARA members are invited to gather for the march at the office of the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), 321 16th Avenue S., Seattle at 1 p.m. We will join the march as it passes by the office. We will march with the Labor contingent. It is a short walk from Judkins Park to the WSLC office if you want to participate in the rally before joining the PSARA contingent. Just be at the WSLC office by 1 p.m.

For the past 10 years, PSARA has joined the May Day march to demonstrate our support for immigrant rights and worker rights. This year the need for a demonstration of unity is greater than ever. Nationally and locally the immigrant rights organizations have called for a general strike of workers to support all immigrants and workers and to continue to resist the divisive anti-worker, anti-immigrant racism and intolerance of the Trump administration and the Republican-controlled Congress.

Immigrants are workers, and no human being is illegal. PSARA is proud to be a long-time supporter and participant in this event. We will join with our brothers and sisters from Labor, immigrant communities, environmental justice organizations, and religious communities. You are invited to join the PSARA contingent on May 1.

Mike Warren is a PSARA Executive Board member and represents PSARA on the May Day coalition.



*PSARA at May Day 2016
(Photo: Garet Munger)*

Go Birding with PSARA

Want to go birdwatching? Our January trip was such a great success we are offering it again, this time in warmer weather! Join us as we go back to the Billy Frank Jr. National Wildlife Refuge in the beautiful Nisqually Delta https://www.fws.gov/refuge/billy_frank_jr_nisqually/ on Saturday, April 8. (Rain date Sunday, April 9)

Our leaders will be Executive Board Member Karen Richter, and her friend, birding expert and naturalist Noelle Congdon.

Beginners are especially welcome as we look for all the wonderful warblers and other spring migrants who will have finally arrived! The trail is handicapped-accessible and is about three miles. Plan to be standing and walking most of the trip. We will stop a lot to look at Nisqually's wildlife. Wear sturdy shoes.

We plan to carpool from Karen's house in West Seattle at 9:00 a.m., returning before dinner. Or we can meet you there. Bring your binocs if you have them (extras will be available), a lunch, and a donation to PSARA. Email Karen at kerichter100@gmail.com or call her at 206 679-3295 for more details.

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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We Want You...To Help Us Raise \$14,000!



The PSARA Executive Board challenges our members to help us raise \$14,000+ for Give Big Day. Read the article on Page 1 to find out how. (Photo: Garet Munger)

Happy Birthday, Robby!

Photo by Garet Munger



PSARA's Executive Board takes a break from business to celebrate Robby Stern's birthday. Left, Robby cuts the cake -- and samples a bit of frosting. PSARA members Kristen Beifus, Karen Richter, Bobby Righi, and Lou Truskoff wait patiently for their piece of cake. Later Lou led us in singing Happy Birthday. The Board made up in enthusiasm what we lacked in musical genius.



King County Councilmember Larry Gossett speaks at PSARA's March 8 "Lunch and Learn" workshop at the Central Area Senior Center. The workshop featured a presentation by PSARA President Robby Stern titled "Protecting, Strengthening, and Expanding Social Security and Medicare for ALL Generations." (Photo: Garet Munger)

March Madness

By Robby Stern

While the NCAA basketball tournament in March is often referred to as March Madness, a better understanding of madness (and plain old meanness) is the American Health Care Act proposed by the Republican leadership.

After the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) issued their estimates for the impact of the proposal, there is no question what is being done. Over 10 years, the impact of this legislation will be devastating to poor and working people, seniors, and people with disabilities. At the same time it will transfer more than \$600 billion into the coffers of wealthy individuals and corporations.

The legislation will sharply increase the costs of health care coverage for people between the ages of 50-64 and provide windfall profits to the private insurance industry. It will increase the amount the insurance corporations can charge older Americans by increasing the amount for older people compared to a 20-year-old from 3:1 (mandated by the ACA) to 5:1, while sharply reducing the amount of financial assistance many older people would receive compared to the ACA. The subsidies of the ACA are being converted into a flat across-the-board tax credit, regardless of income. The impact for older Washingtonians will not be as severe, as Washington's insurance rules restrict the ratio for private insurers to 3.5:1.

What has not been discussed as much is the likelihood that insurance plans will become skimpier, and while being less affordable, they will also provide inferior coverage for a growing number of people. This is, of course, on top of the projected 24 million who will lose coverage over the next decade.

Recently, Governor Inslee and Insurance Commissioner Kreidler released some Washington-specific numbers regarding the impact of the American Health Care Act. (Republican Care/ Trump Care, what have you!)

In part, they project for Washington:

- \$530 million needed in 2019-2021 budget, increasing to \$1.4 billion in 2024 and beyond to continue the Medicaid expansion.

- Coverage for 600,000 Medicaid people will be discontinued unless the state comes up with the \$1.4 billion.

- \$90 million cut for services for the elderly and disabled immediately on passage.

- Uninsured rate will grow from current 5.8% to 15% by 2020.

- Between 70,000 and 100,000 people in the individual market will drop coverage because of no mandate (20-29 age group) and affordability (50-64 age group).

- 24,000 veterans and their families will lose current coverage.

- 98,000 people who get services from Planned Parenthood will lose access to services and, if not insured, will have difficulty affording or accessing care.

- Older people (50-64) in lower-income households will see the biggest drops in affordability and coverage.

PSARA will continue to organize and resist this Trump/Republican agenda. One of our tasks is to try to limit the damage as much as possible and to build the political momentum to turn the tide in our country in the coming years.

At the same time, we cannot let the Democrats off the hook. It is great that they are also resisting as best they can, but they MUST put forward a positive vision of where they want to go. The progressives in Congress are trying to play the role of providing that positive vision, but they cannot do it alone.

Here is an example. The Social Security Expansion Act enhances Social Security benefits and ensures the long-term solvency of the Social Security program. It was introduced on February



Dina, Robby, and new grandson, Manny, born March 10.

16, 2017, in the Senate as S. 427 by Sen. Bernie Sanders. It has only one sponsor, Sen. Sanders. Rep. Peter DeFazio introduced the same bill in the House, H.R. 1114. It has 23 co-sponsors including Rep. Pramila Jayapal. A number of different organizations in Washington have contacted Washington's two senators and nine representatives and asked them to co-sponsor the legislation. So far, nothing substantive has happened.

It can be all too comfortable for our Democratic politicians to play defense and use that as a way to say "look what we are doing for you." But that simply will not work anymore! We will continue to demand that they propose what they want to do and will do when they have the majority. What is their vision for Social Security; health care, including Medicare (for all!); climate change; the economy; wealth disparity; etc.

PSARA will work with our allies to build a genuine progressive movement that has a vision for a better country and a better world. Our members will hear from us as opportunities to demonstrate public resistance occur. And you will also hear from us asking you to contact our elected officials as opportunities arise to support a vision for a better, more just system in our country.

PSARA Turnout for 2017 Senior Lobby Day Hits Record

By Chuck Richards, photos by Garet Munger

A record number of 60 PSARA members registered and attended Senior Lobby Day on Thursday, February 23, 2017. And several of the bills and budget proposals to both increase revenue and share the state's returning prosperity with seniors and working families are still alive.

Following is the status of our 2017 Legislative Agenda:

- Options for General Fund budget items and elimination of unfair tax exemptions will be discussed until the last days of the legislative session. We will need to be in touch with our legislators over the next several months.

- The \$200 million allocation for the Housing Trust Fund is a budget item that survives until the Capital Budget passes.

- Paid Family Leave legislation (HB 1116) passed in the Appropriations Committee and is awaiting floor action. It stays alive until the end of the session, as it is "necessary to implement the budget." (NTIB)

- The Long Term Care legislation (HB 1636) failed to get voted out of committee.

- A proposal for a Carbon Tax that invests in a cleaner environment and healthier communities (HB 1646) had a



The PSARA crew in Olympia

House committee hearing on March 14. PSARA's Administrative Vice President, Bobby Righi, testified in favor of the bill on behalf of PSARA. PSARA Executive Board member Mauricio Ayon, testifying for Front and Centered, a coalition of more than 65 organizations representing people of color, also supported the legislation. HB 1646 is alive until the end of the session.

Other highlights of Senior Lobby Day included informative speakers at the morning orientation sessions, meetings with legislators or legislative staff from a number of legislative districts, as well as an open meeting for all PSARA members with Speaker Frank Chopp (a PSARA member) and Rep. Nicole Macri.

Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler spoke in the morning to several hundred attendees on the impact of repeal of the Affordable Care Act. He warned of the pitfalls of interstate sales of health insurance: "Interstate sales would lead to a race to the bottom for consumer protection. They would

weaken state regulatory power and encourage insurers to locate in the state with the least oversight. Health insurers would then be able to cherry-pick customers and avoid anyone with a health condition. Policies would cover less and discourage the sick from even applying for coverage."

PSARA's Robby Stern also spoke to the morning session about the importance of defending and expanding Social Security and Medicare. He asked the attendees to "hitch up their britches" and to take action by calling our Congressional delegation and asking them to co-sponsor HR 1114 and S 427, The Social Security Expansion Act. He also urged them to tell their Congressional representatives to oppose the cuts to health care, including cuts to the benefits provided by the Affordable Care Act that the Republicans are proposing in the American Health Care Act.

PSARA will continue to send out timely email alerts as policy and budget items work their way through the legislative process.

Chuck Richards is the co-chair of the PSARA Government Relations Committee and the chief organizer of our Lobby Day activities.



PSARA members listen intently at a meeting with electeds.

24 Million to Lose Health Insurance. Paul Ryan Finds That Encouraging.

By Mike Andrew

Fourteen million people will lose their health insurance if the Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare) is replaced by the American Health Care Act (AHCA or Trumpcare). By 2026 that number will rise to 24 million.

Seven million people will lose employer-provided health insurance by 2026, because Republicans want to abolish tax breaks for small businesses that helped finance insurance plans for their employees.

In less than a decade, 52 million Americans will be uninsured. Under the ACA, the total number of uninsured in 2026 would be somewhere around 28 million.

Individual insurance premiums will actually rise by 15 to 20 percent in 2018 and 2019. Without the ACA mandate, which will be abolished under Trumpcare, healthier people will leave the market, and the sicker people who are left will have to pay more.

Premiums will begin to fall in 2020, but only because sicker people will no longer be able to afford the high cost of health insurance and will drop their coverage.

Not only will millions of people lose health insurance, but Trumpcare transfers a huge amount of money from the poor and sick to the rich. Under the Republican plan, there would be an estimated \$880 billion worth of cuts to Medicaid, and \$883 billion worth of tax cuts for investors, insurance companies, and pharmaceutical companies.

The Trumpcare plan would also steal from the Medicare Trust Fund to benefit the richest Americans by repealing a tax on high-income earners. This will take as much as \$345 billion from Medicare and pave the way for Ryan to turn it into a voucher system.

These numbers – from the nonpartisan CBO, or Congressional Budget Office – warn of a health care catastrophe if Trumpcare passes, but House Speaker Paul Ryan said he was “pretty encouraged” by the report.

“It actually exceeded my expectations,” Ryan added.

While Ryan was encouraged, other members of Congress were appalled.

“It’s so terrible,” Senator Angus King of Maine said, “the more people learn about it, the worse it is.”

What happens in Washington State?

Trumpcare would wipe out all the gains made by Washington residents under the ACA, a new study warns.

The study, by the State Insurance Commissioner’s office and the Department of Social and Health Services, was unveiled March 15 by Governor Jay Insee and State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler.

“It is a disaster for Washington,” Insee said. The Governor is writing to the state’s congressional delegation, asking lawmakers to “blow the whistle on this train wreck.”

Under the ACA, 600,000 lower-income Washingtonians have gained coverage through Medicaid expansion, 80% of them in working families. An additional 190,000 enrolled this year in Qualified Health Plans through the state’s Health Plan Finder.

Overall, the percentage of uninsured in this state fell from 14% in 2013 to only 5.8%.

The number of uninsured was cut by 58% by the ACA but would soar back above pre-ACA levels under the Republican plan, the study found.

Under Trumpcare, the federal subsidy for Medicaid coverage would be abolished, and the current 5.8% uninsured would climb to 15%, said the state study.

“There are currently 410,000 uninsured people in Washington: If Trumpcare takes effect, it will jump to 1.1 million people, higher than it was before the Affordable Care Act,” said Kreidler.

An estimated 24,000 veterans and their spouses stand to lose Medicaid coverage, the state study found.



*Here’s to losing your health insurance!
(YouTube)*

“We are very conservative in these numbers,” Kreidler added. “We are low-balling if anything.”

Ironically, the study found a higher percentage of people are likely to lose health insurance in rural areas like Cowlitz, Lewis, and Grays Harbor Counties – all of which voted for Donald Trump – than in populous King County, which gave Hillary Clinton a 500,000-vote majority.

What can you do to stop Trumpcare?

Speaker Ryan plans to shove the Trumpcare bill through the House before the Congressional recess scheduled in April. He wants his members to vote before they’re confronted by angry constituents who stand to lose their insurance.

The Health Care is a Human Right (HCHR) coalition, which includes PSARA, is targeting the Republican members of the Washington State Congressional delegation, pressuring them to vote No when Trumpcare comes up. HCHR has developed fact sheets for each Republican-represented Congressional district showing exactly how many people have benefitted from the ACA, how many stand to lose coverage, and how much money ACA subsidies bring into the district.

The fact sheets can be found at <http://healthcareisarightwa.org/>

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Jazz Musician Helps Shine a Light on Seattle's Racist Past

By Karen Richter with Paul Muldoon and Caroline Feiss

I was sitting in the Tea Room of the historic Panama Hotel, listening to the Steve Griggs Jazz Ensemble and thinking about the story Steve just told about the impact of the Japanese internment on the Japanese Community in Seattle and remembering all the articles by PSARA's Bob Shimabukuro. Steve is pioneering an approach to social justice that combines jazz and storytelling to help Seattleites understand and confront the City's troubled history of racism.

I first met Steve Griggs at a KNKX Studio session in downtown Seattle. He and his ensemble were playing songs and being interviewed by KNKX radio host Robin Wright. Steve talked about his other work including "Panama Hotel Jazz: Music Made from Memories," which is the first project in the Steve Griggs Ensemble portfolio "Songs of Unsong Seattle."

In addition to the Japanese internment, Steve speaks of Joe Brazil, a popular activist, whose failure to earn tenure at the University of Washington in 1974 sparked student protests and whose Black Academy of Music had a profound effect on many Central Area musicians. However, his pro-black stance alienated whites, and he was ultimately denied tenure. Steve also tells the story of the Duwamish Tribe, which still has not been recognized by the federal government.

Steve, a tenor saxophonist, composer, researcher, and writer, addresses social injustice with music and words. His ensemble plays his music that carries a message from those significant chapters in American history when war hysteria, race prejudice, and political leadership ignored Constitutional protections for citizens. His music combines jazz improvisations with stories told by those who were incarcerated.

The *Panama Hotel CD* tells the story of the hotel, which stands at the center of Seattle's Japan Town (Nihonmachi) on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Main

Street. It is the hotel in Jamie Ford's novel *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*. Designed by Sabro Ozasa, Seattle's first practicing Japanese architect, the building has a living historic museum with unclaimed items from the Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II. Located adjacent to Seattle's historic Jackson Street jazz scene, many musicians likely stayed at the hotel.

I was especially impressed by the story and the song called "Loyalty." Steve introduced the song by telling the story told by a Japanese man in an internment camp during WWII. In one part of the story Steve recounts how Uncle Sam, in an effort to recruit soldiers for the war, gave a questionnaire to all male internees over 17 years old that asked several questions. One was: Will you serve in the U.S. military? This was the same military that was pointing guns at him in the prison. The second was: Will you forswear loyalty to the Japanese Emperor and pledge allegiance to the U.S.?

He knew that in addition to the challenge of pledging allegiance to the same country that had imprisoned them, Japanese internees faced the issue that by giving up citizenship in Japan, they would become stateless and become separated from their American-born children, since, after the Civil War, the U.S. changed its immigration policies to only allow European and African immigrants to become U.S. citizens, not Asians. So he asked himself this question: How can I pledge allegiance to a country that denies citizenship to immigrants, restricts civil rights



The authors: Caroline, Paul, and Karen.

based on race, assesses guilt by association, and incarcerates citizens without charging them with a crime?

Another song is from a story by a jailed farmer who removed stones from his garden plot in the camp and stacked them under his window. After working hard all day, he remembered listening to the sound of rain dripping from the eaves onto the rocks and wrote a poem about it. Steve read the poem and wrote a composition inspired by the poem.

After the session Steve graciously made himself available to discuss his work. I asked Steve what parallels he sees between the internment and what is happening today with the Muslim ban put forward by the Trump administration.

Steve replied that the internment orders were Executive Orders by the President. The redress for Japanese Americans resulted in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which stated that the government acted because of "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of

Continued on Page 10

American Healthcare: All About Money, Hospitals, Meds, and Insurance

By Bob Shimabukuro

We go hospital with Sam. Emergency. Your faddah and me talk to the hospital man. He say, "This is serious, we can save him, but going be expensive. You want to go ahead, leave him for a few days?"

Your faddah, he get mad. He start yelling at the hospital man; I calm him down. Tell him we go check with Zen (Tokuda) Uncle. Sam stay hospital, I t'ink a week maybe.

---Zenwa (Shima) Uncle, on what happened when my brother Sam contracted tetanus/lockjaw from a scorpion bite in the summer of 1944 shortly after he was born.

When Uncle told me what happened (it was in the summer after my first year in college), it made me think deeply about our families' lives in colonial Hawaii. Uncle told the story in a matter-of-fact way, like just an ordinary day in the life of our family, with him finding a way to calm his younger, hot-headed brother, and working things out. It was a powerful realization that he turned an outrageous tale of an uncaring medical staff person callously asking if we could pay the fees to save Sam's life into an everyday story.

I was born a year after Sam's bout with lockjaw, and I don't remember much what this house was like, but common among all the houses that I remember living in was that our family of nine shared our home with other critters, like scorpions, spiders, lizards (gecko), ants, flies, mice, and of course, termites.

Sam's lockjaw story made me very apprehensive about the American medical establishment. "You pay, we save. You don't, we don't."

That was the message I got.

* * *

Colchicine has been used for a long time. It used to cost pennies a day. All generics. One company saw a loophole---none of the generics had been tested. This company ran its generic through the necessary tests, got it approved, and charged that none of the others were qualified generics. Sued the other companies and won. Their generic colchicine is called Colchrys.

The other companies couldn't sell their product. The company had a monopoly and raised their prices.

---Rheumatologist, Dr. NJS

URL Pharma, the company that manufactures colchicine, then decided to patent their formulation, Colchrys, and won a 20-year patent protection. Expiration date: February 10, 2029.

How much did they raise the price? Well, Asia's biggest drugmaker, Takeda Pharmaceutical Company, bought URL Pharma in 2012, probably sensing the possibilities with patent protection, and raised the price from nine cents/tablet, to \$4.85/tablet. That translates monthly (30 days) into an increase from \$2.70 to \$145.50 each month.

Remember EpiPen for people with allergies? Went from \$100 a dose to \$600 for a two-pack, because "sometimes you can't get to a hospital quick enough, so you need two" Daraprim for HIV patients? Naloxone for drug overdoses? These monopolies are gouging people who need their medicine so they can live.

Big Pharma's message to us: "You'll pay whatever we can get out of you, because we really don't care."

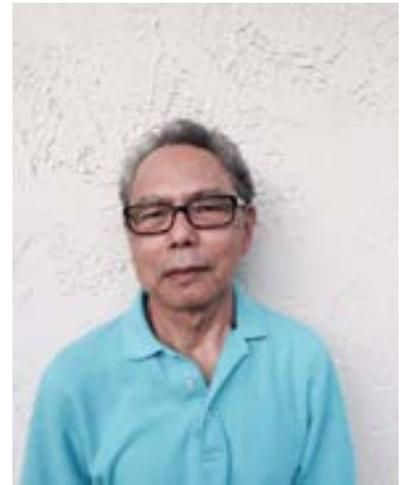
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And now, insurance. The replacement for "Obamacare" and Medicaid.

It's hard for me to deal with. Back to reliance on emergency care for any kind of treatment. Like in 1944 for Sam, we got proposals which reach out to nobody. The poor will not have a way to pay for their medical bills. Lots and lots of lies saying that we will have the freedom to choose among affordable individual plans. The other choice is that you won't be "forced" to buy any insurance. Which is what will happen.

Many have made statements about how complicated this is.

It isn't. Here's my take on it. First things first: Nobody wants to take credit for the Republicans' proposal(s), so I'll name the bill: I was getting confused by all who were getting involved, so I thought it should be: The Ayn Rand-Paul Ryan-Donald Trump Act.



It's simple. It's easy to understand: Steal from the poor, give to the rich.

That's it. We see once again, a transfer of money, going to the rich in the form of tax exemptions. And it looks as if the only departments the Prez wants to keep are the Departments of Offense & Disasters, and Department of Homeland Security.

A lot of tax money for Wars abroad and at home.

Get ready, we can't let this happen.

I often wonder about Dad and Uncle. They wanted us to make the world a better place. And I look at what's going on now. Is it really better? We still got some selfish, arrogant, greedy actors running around claiming they're our leaders.

Back home, over 65 years ago, we had a group that we all called the Big Five. They controlled Hawaii.

Today, the world economy is controlled by the Big Eight, who control a lot more than Hawaii. Six of those eight are Americans. Two of them live in Washington State. How different is it? Really.

We need to Resist Everything they propose. And take the offense for what we want. Take to the Streets. To the Front Doors, the Back Doors, and talk and organize. And prepare for the changes we care about: Breathable Air, Drinkable Water, Healthy Food, and No Leak Shelter (without infected scorpions).

Catch a Breath. Then Keep Moving. Something is Definitely Happening here.

Bob Shimabukuro is a member of PSARA's Board and Associate Editor of the Retiree Advocate.

Bartolome, Cuba

By Robby Stern

In our first several days in Cuba, five of the people in our delegation stayed in Bartolome, a small rural town in the foothills of the Sierra Maestras, while others took a two-day hike to the highest peak in Cuba.

There is a large sugar cane processing factory in the middle of town that is the largest employer for residents of the area. People were everywhere on the sidewalks and streets, and they were of all colors and hues. Transportation is primarily on foot, many women walking with umbrellas to protect against the sun. A large community garden across from the sugar cane factory was filled with cabbage and corn.

Lots of people were riding really old bikes, and there was an occasional horse-back rider. There were quite a few horse-drawn carriages that seemed to serve as public transportation. A few large old trucks were hauling people. I didn't know if they were taxis or work vehicles. Ninety-nine percent of the motor-driven vehicles were vintage. It is quite an accomplishment to keep them running.

The museum in Bartolome had formerly been used as a prison by the Batista forces. Peasants were threatened and tortured there, particularly those who were known to not be supporting the existing order that Batista and his allies had imposed. A public gym was occupied by a number of kids who were taking a martial arts class. We were welcomed there and observed the class while the instructor explained in Spanish a little about the form of martial art and our friend Becky translated.

We came upon a surprisingly large community baseball field (center field fence 400') with bleachers. There was no game the first day we walked into town, but on the second day, when we were at the farmers market, we heard cheers and walked over to the field. There was a youth baseball game at the field (the kids looked to be between 8 and 10). We watched and enjoyed with a sparse but enthusiastic sprinkling of fans in the bleachers.

At the outdoor farmers market, farmers were selling onions, beautiful long ropes of garlic, cabbages, tomatoes, peppers, etc. There were also three small grocery stores in town, all of which were quite busy. There was a large town square with a small movie theater, a pizza place, and an in-home restaurant on the perimeter of the square. Unfortunately, we missed the Saturday night salsa music and dancing in the town square.

Our hotel in Bartholome was Balcon de Sierra. It is a former army barrack built on a hill with a very impressive rock and concrete wall and a view of the valley and small farms below. It was very basic, and that was just fine with us. The first night at the hotel (breakfast and dinner were provided), there was a great salsa band at the hotel, and we enjoyed salsa dancing with another large extended family made up of toddlers through grandparents.

Our second night at the hotel we had a conversation with Merta, the food server at the hotel. Becky translated for us. Dina and I had been sitting on the patio outside the hotel restaurant with our friends Jeff and Becky. Merta came out and sat down with us. (I remembered being asked to sit down with some customers after work when I was a waiter and being told by the manager that it was inappropriate.) We asked Merta questions about her life, and she was very forthcoming. She was born a few years after the revolution, but her family had felt the strong arm of Batista before she was born. Her mother and older brother (we weren't clear where her father was at the time) were taken to the building that is now the museum in Bartolome. They were told they had to give up their horses and other farm animals to the Batista forces or they would be killed.

They were somehow able to escape and head back to safer ground. The family supported the revolution, as did the vast majority of rural people, according to Merta.



Bank of Cuba in Bartolome with Che mural on the front. (Photo: Dina Burstein)

After the revolution, when Merta was four years old, a big cyclone hit her little village in the valley not far from Bartolome. Nearly two thousand people were killed, the village was flattened and in rubble, and almost all the farm animals were killed. The revolutionary government stepped in and offered to move the village to higher ground where it would be safer. All the survivors from the village who wanted to stay were moved to higher ground where the government built housing for them and provided animals. Others who no longer wanted to be in the area were given assistance to move.

Merta spoke to us about her gratitude and love for Fidel and how her heart was aching at his recent death. She told us she was determined to pass on his legacy to her grandchildren and her children. It was amazing and a genuine gift to us that Merta spoke to us from her heart, and we shared a warmth for each other that led to sad goodbyes when we departed the next day.

I could not help thinking about the response of our government when Katrina hit New Orleans and Sandy hit the East Coast. Merta's story was a wonderful example of this poor but determined government prioritizing taking care of its people and the genuine gratitude of someone who felt the results of a government that was loyal to the working people of her country.

Another world is definitely possible!

The Theft of the 2020 Presidential Election is Underway

Mark M. McDermott

If you care about our democracy, our nation, fair elections, the right of the people to fairly choose our elected officials, and our future, you should be paying close attention to the systematic efforts of the Trump regime, Corporate America, and their Republican allies to steal the 2018 and 2020 elections. Regardless of the issues you care about, you should care about fair elections. Stolen national elections in 2018 and 2020 will have a devastating effect on you and those you love and the issues you care about. This renewed effort is a continuation of a decades-long strategy.

The attempted grand theft of these elections started on November 27, 2016, when Trump began his "Big Lie" propaganda campaign about a stolen election by stating: "In addition to winning the Electoral College by a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally." Trump has steadfastly refused to demonstrate the truth of his "Big Lie." In response to growing challenges to his lying, Trump said: "You know what is important. Millions of people agree with me when I say that." Yes, they were ignorantly believing his "Big Lie."

On January 27, 2017, with no proof of any serious voter fraud, Vice-President Pence laid out their strategy to steal the election in 2020: We need "a full evaluation of the voting rolls in the country and to protect the overall integrity of the voting system." With overwhelming evidence that major voter fraud is *not* taking place, what is their deeper motive? To restrict voting rights of millions of Americans and legally steal our elections by diluting the voting power of those opposed to their radical policy agenda.

This is not a new idea. Our nation's history of voter suppression and stealing elections is long and ugly. Consider Mississippi. In the late 1880s, a biracial coalition of Republicans and Populists won the governor's race and the State

House. This coalition was made up of many poor black and white farmers and workers who deeply resented the economic and political domination of the wealthy planter class. The ruling elites in the South understood that growing class unity of black and white farmers and workers had to be crushed to ensure their continued domination. This threat would spark a vicious, violent, and successful white supremacist anti-democratic backlash. Crushing democracy, committing violence, and championing white supremacy were the roads to success.

James K. Vardaman, Governor and U.S. Senator from Mississippi, said it best:

"Mississippi's constitutional convention of 1890 was held for no other purpose than to eliminate the ni--er from politics...Let the world know it just as it is...In Mississippi we have in our Constitution legislated against the racial peculiarities of the Negro...When that device fails, we will resort to something else...If it is necessary, every Negro in the state will be lynched; it will be done to maintain white supremacy."

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the new Constitution was legal. The impact was extraordinary. Between 1876 and 1920, voter participation fell from 70 percent to 10 percent. Virtually all blacks and most poor whites were disenfranchised. By 1940, less than one percent of voting-age blacks were registered to vote.

Governor Vardaman's threats of violence came true. In 1919, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People reported 3,224 lynchings in the U.S. in the previous 30 years. Mississippi led the nation. The vast majority of the victims were black. No one was convicted. The states which led the racist stealing of the right to vote successfully prevented Congress from passing an anti-lynching law as state officials would not crack down on the racist terror and violence.



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Democracy was killed in Mississippi with the full support of the U.S. Supreme Court. This pattern was repeated across the South to ensure white supremacy but also supremacy of wealthy whites and their corporate allies. This catastrophic loss of democracy in the South harmed working people, people of color, women, and immigrants all over the country, as the Congress would block much progressive legislation that would have improved the lives of all Americans. The death of democracy in the South would remain unchanged until the great non-violent uprising of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Civil Rights Movement led by courageous and heroic black people and their white allies would fundamentally change our democracy. It would also produce a powerful nationwide, decades-long, right-wing, corporate-funded attack on hard-won voting rights. (See next month's article on our great voting rights victories and the ongoing anti-democratic counterattack of the Republicans and their corporate allies.)

Editor's Note: This article is the first of two articles on attacks on voting rights.

Mark McDermott is a member of PSARA's Executive Board and serves on PSARA's Education Committee.

International Women's Day 2017

By Thalia Syracopoulos

The March 8 International Women's Day event at Town Hall was glorious. I (and hundreds of others) laughed, cheered, shed a few tears, but most importantly, we were awed and inspired by the remarkable women who shared their stories.

A slide show on women trailblazers, past and present, began the evening. This was followed by a history lesson about the life-changing courage of our foremothers, including Margaret Sanger, a nurse whose work resulted in the overturning of the Comstock Laws prohibiting birth control, and Delores Huerta, a powerful force in the creation of the United Farm Workers Union and the overturning of the "Femme Covert" laws that forced women to be economic subordinates to their husbands.

A panel of five women shared their stories about taking risks. They left high-paying, secure positions in the private sector and brought their knowledge, leadership, and organizational skills to work in or establish organizations dedicated to making Seattle, and even the world, a better place.

Each of these women went on to better the lives of women in many different ways: developing and adapting technologies in health appropriate to developing countries; founding a women's shelter in Seattle that is close to fulfilling its goal of housing for ev-



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eryone; developing and expanding the public radio that provides us with fact-based journalism; providing a health care resource that has cut the percentage of uninsured Latinas and Latinos by 50 percent and has worked to close the gender pay gap between white men and white (78 cents), black (64 cents) and Latino (54 cents) women. All stressed that pay and health equity are one battle and that both are improved with education.

While their paths differed radically, each spoke of the importance of having a passion and a commitment to contribute. The women provided advice

about clarifying one's values in support of productively pursuing one's passion for those values. They stressed the importance of caring for oneself, because without that you cannot help others. They all recognized the importance for each of us to have and to be mentors.

The most dramatic and inspiring presentation was by Martha Adams, founder of Girls Rising, an organization that succeeds in empowering girls worldwide and shares their stories as inspiration for all of us who seek to better the lives of women and girls. Her message was a powerful validation of a basic force for change. When girls are educated, everyone rises, economically, socially, and with improved health.

Ms. Adams showed the film "Girls Rising." It was awe-inspiring evidence of the ways in which education has empowered girls themselves to make changes in society, which included girls being freed from childhood slavery, and working in concert to continue to change their world.

While each woman presenting brought her own perspective and history, the unified, powerful, and inspirational message was that if we take risks and join together, we too can create miracles.

Thalia Syracopoulos is a PSARA member and on the Board of the Seattle chapter of the National Organization for Women.

Jazz Musician Helps Shine a Light on Seattle's Racist Past

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political leadership." Steve added that he feels that these three things are present today and that they are behind our current President's order. He noted that the legal apparatus to imprison Japanese Americans was dismantled after WWII but was re-established in the 1950s to fight Communism.

Steve's storytelling messages, combined with great jazz, are well worth

hearing. The Steve Griggs Ensemble is playing April 13, 8 p.m., at the Chapel Performance Space (4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103) for the Wayward Music Series (<http://www.waywardmusic.org/>). This will be a completely improvised set of music with Steve's son Ben Griggs and will be their first performance together. The concept of the show and possible additional musicians are still being devel-

oped. Steve said, "I'm very excited by this opportunity."

We encourage you to go hear them.

Karen Richter, Paul Muldoon, and Caroline Feiss are all PSARA members. Karen serves on the PSARA Executive Board and also leads birdwatching tours for PSARA members and friends.

Executive Board Challenge

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The financial resources in the Education Fund are being depleted monthly, and Give Big Day is a critical time when we can restore those resources for our future work.

To donate, beginning on April 27, you can go to www.givebigseattle.org and enter the PSARA Education Fund and then follow the instructions.

If every member of PSARA who receives this newsletter donated to the PSARA Education Fund we would raise much more than \$14,000. But we are realistic and know that not everyone receiving the newsletter can or will take that step. We are counting on those of you who are able and willing to donate to participate in Give Big Day and to donate what you can. Our goal is to raise \$14,000+. Additionally, by donating, you also put us in the running for the drawing!

Every donation, no matter how big or small (there is a \$10 minimum), will help us meet the Executive Board challenge. Our hope is that many of you will donate and help us exceed the challenge from the Executive Board.

To say the least, these are very demanding times. Our fight to preserve and expand Social Security and Medicare for present and future generations has never been more necessary. With your assistance, PSARA will be able to continue all that we do, including the retirement security education and advocacy and our solidarity actions with other social, environmental, and economic justice struggles. Please help us on Give Big Day by donating to the PSARA Education Fund. <https://www.givebigseattle.org/>



Stand Up for Climate Action

By Kat Plimpton

In the wake of the federal election, statements by the new head of the EPA, and the administration's recently released federal budget proposal that guts climate change research and vital programs for localities and the poor, climate activists are taking to the streets in Washington, D.C. and across the country on April 29 to advocate for climate action. In the Northwest, climate justice advocates are planning an entire week of climate action focusing not just on the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also on the need to alleviate the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations.

Starting on April 22 — Earth Day — PSARA members will join the Seattle March for Science. (When we know more details about this march, we will email our members for whom we have email addresses.) That will kick off a week of workshops and activist training programs by climate activists, which will culminate in the May Day March on May 1.

These marches and other actions will call on the administration in Washington to adhere to the Paris Agreement that was adopted in December of 2015 in order to restrain global warming. At present, 194 nations, including the United States, have signed the treaty. But the election of Donald Trump places our commitment to the Paris Agreement and the world's ability to avert catastrophic effects from global warming at risk. Please help climate activists from around Washington, the country, and the world press our elected leaders to protect the world, the vulnerable, and our way of life.

Kat Plimpton serves on the PSARA Environmental Committee.

24 Million to Lose Health Insurance

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If you live in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 8th Congressional Districts, you can use them as ammunition to push for your Congressperson to vote against Trumpcare. Call their offices and tell them to oppose the destructive ACHA. Share the facts with your neighbors too.

And if you live in other parts of the state, email the link to friends and family who live in Republican-represented districts.

HCHR is also collecting stories of people who have benefitted from the ACA or who will be hurt if they lose coverage under Trumpcare. If you have a story to share or you know someone who does, contact me at organizer@psara.org or call 206-261-8110.

To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund
2800 1st Avenue, Room 262, Seattle WA 98121
Donations are tax deductible

- Basic contribution: \$20
- Limited income/living lightly: \$15 or whatever you can afford
- Supporting: \$50 New contributor
- Sponsoring: \$100 or more Renewing contributor

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Meetings and Events

PSARA Education Committee: 1 p.m.–3 p.m., Tuesday, April 4, PSARA office, 2800 First Ave., Rm. 234, Seattle. All welcome as we work to expand outreach for the PSARA workshop.

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon–1:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 5, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave. SW, Seattle, 98126 (35th & Henderson). Topic: *State and Local Taxes; Explained and Explored*, led by economist and PSARA member Michael Righi. Brown bag lunch. For further information, contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m., Thursday, April 6, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m.–2:30 p.m., Thursday, April 6, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave. All welcome.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon–1:30 p.m., Thursday, April 13, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 East Green Lake Dr. N, Seattle. Brown bag lunch. Topic: *State and Local Taxes; Explained and Explored*. Led by economist and PSARA member Michael Righi. For further information, contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m.–noon, Thursday, April 20, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16 Avenue S., Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m.–3 p.m., Thursday, April 20, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. All are welcome.

May Day Rally and March: Rally – 11 a.m., May 1. Rally at Judkins Park, 2150 S. Norman St., Seattle. March at 1 p.m., PSARA will march with the Labor contingent. Gather at the Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle, (a short walk from Judkins Park) at 1 p.m. (See article on Page 1)

